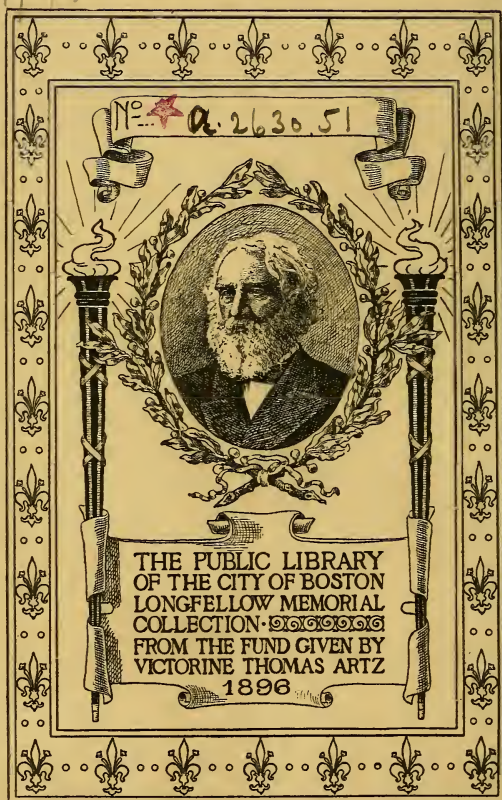


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THE YOUNG AMERICAN.

A LECTURE

READ BEFORE THE MERCANTILE LIBRARY ASSOCIATION, IN
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BY

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THE YOUNG AMERICAN.

GENTLEMEN :

IT is remarkable, that our people have their intellectual culture from one country, and their duties from another. Our books are European. We were born within the fame and sphere of Shakspeare and Milton, of Bacon, Dryden, and Pope; our college text-books are the writings of Butler, Locke, Paley, Blackstone, and Stewart; and our domestic reading has been Clarendon and Hume, Addison and Johnson, Young and Cowper, Edgeworth and Scott, Southey, Coleridge, and Wordsworth, and the Edinburgh and Quarterly Reviews. We are sent to a feudal school to learn democracy. A gulf yawns for the young American between his education and his work. We are like the all-accomplished banker's daughter, who, when her education was finished, and her father had become a bankrupt, and she was asked what she could do for him in his sickness and misfortunes,—could she make a shirt, mix bread, scald milk-pans? No, but she could waltz, and cut rice-paper, and paint velvet, and transfer drawings, and make satin stitch, and play on the clavichord, and sing German songs, and act charades, and arrange tableaux, and a great many other equally useful and indispensable performances. It has seemed verily so with the education of our young men; the system of thought was the growth of monarchical institutions, whilst those that were flourishing around them were not consecrated to their imagination nor interpreted to their understanding.

This false state of things is newly in a way to be corrected. America is beginning to assert itself to the senses and to the imagination of her children, and Europe is receding in the same degree. This their reaction on education gives a new importance to the internal improvements and to the politics of the country.

There is no American citizen who has not been stimulated to reflection by the facilities now in progress of construction for travel and the transportation of goods in the United States. The alleged effect to augment disproportionately the size of

cities, is in a rapid course of fulfilment in this metropolis of New England.

The growth of Boston, never slow, has been so accelerated since the railroads have been opened which join it to Providence, to Albany, and to Portland, that the extreme depression of general trade has not concealed it from the most careless eye. The narrow peninsular, which a few years ago easily held its thirty or forty thousand people, with many pastures and waste lands, not to mention the large private gardens in the midst of the town, has been found too strait when forty are swelled to a hundred thousand. The waste lands have been fenced in and builded over, the private gardens one after the other have become streets. Boston proper consisted of seven hundred and twenty acres of land. Acre after acre has been since won from the sea, and in a short time the antiquary will find it difficult to trace the peninsular topography. Within the last year, the newspapers tell us, from twelve to fifteen hundred buildings of all sorts have been erected, many of them of a rich and durable character. And because each of the new avenues of iron road ramifies like the bough of a tree, the growth of the city proceeds at a geometrical rate. Already a new road is shooting north-west towards the Connecticut and Montreal; and every great line of road that is completed makes cross sections from road to road more practicable, so that the land will presently be mapped in a network of iron.

This rage for road-building is beneficent for America, where vast distance is so main a consideration in our domestic politics and trade, inasmuch as the great political promise of the invention is to hold the Union staunch, whose days seemed already numbered by the mere inconvenience of transporting representatives, judges, and officers, across such tedious distances of land and water. Not only is distance annihilated, but when, as now, the locomotive and the steamboat, like enormous shuttles, shoot every day across the thousand various threads of national descent and employment, and bind them fast in one web, an hourly assimilation goes forward, and there is no danger that local peculiarities and hostilities should be preserved.

The new power is hardly less noticeable in its relation to the immigrant population, chiefly to the people of Ireland, as having given employment to hundreds of thousands of the natives of that country, who are continually arriving in every vessel from Great Britain.

In an uneven country the railroad is a fine object in the making. It has introduced a multitude of picturesque traits

into our pastoral scenery. The tunneling of mountains, the bridging of streams, the bold mole carried out into a broad silent meadow, silent and unvisited by any but its own neighbours since the planting of the region ; the encounter at short distances along the track of gangs of labourers ; the energy with which they strain at their tasks ; the cries of the overseer or *boss* ; the character of the work itself, which so violates and revolutionizes the primal and immemorial forms of nature ; the village of shanties, at the edge of beautiful lakes until now the undisturbed haunt of the wild duck, and in the most sequestered nooks of the forest, around which the wives and children of the Irish are seen ; the number of foreigners, men and women, whom now the woodsman encounters singly in the forest paths ; the blowing of rocks, explosions all day, with the occasional alarm of frightful accident, and the indefinite promise of what the new channel of trade may do and undo for the rural towns, keep the senses and imagination active ; and the varied aspects of the enterprise make it the topic of all companies, in cars and boats, and by firesides.

This picture is a little saddened, when too nearly seen, by the wrongs that are done in the contracts that are made with the labourers. Our hospitality to the poor Irishman has not much merit in it. We pay the poor fellow very ill. To work from dark to dark for sixty, or even fifty cents a-day, is but pitiful wages for a married man. It is a pittance when paid in cash ; but when, as generally happens, through the extreme wants of the one party, met by the shrewdness of the other, he draws his pay in clothes and food, and in other articles of necessity, his case is still worse ; he buys everything at disadvantage, and has no adviser or protector. Besides, the labour done is excessive, and the sight of it reminds one of negro-driving. Good farmers and sturdy labourers say that they have never seen so much work got out of a man in a day. Poor fellows ! Hear their stories of their exodus from the old country, and their landing in the new, and their fortunes appear as little under their own control as the leaves of the forest around them. As soon as the ship that brought them is anchored, one is whirled off to Albany, one to Ohio, one digs at the levee at New Orleans, and one beside the waterwheels at Lowell, some fetch and carry on the wharves of New York and Boston, some in the woods of Maine. They have too little money, and too little knowledge, to allow them the exercise of much more election of whither to go, or what to do, than the leaf that is blown into this dike or that brook to perish.

And yet their plight is not so grievous as it seems. The escape from the squalid despair of their condition at home, into the unlimited opportunities of their existence here, must be reckoned a gain. The Irish father and mother are very ill paid, and are victims of fraud and private oppression; but their children are instantly received into the schools of the country; they grow up in perfect communication and equality with the native children, and owe to their parents a vigour of constitution which promises them at least an even chance in the competitions of the new generation. Whether it is this confidence that puts a drop of sweetness in their cup, or whether the buoyant spirits natural to the race, it is certain that they seem to have almost a monopoly of the vivacity and good nature in our towns, and contrast broadly, in that particular, with the native people. In the village where I reside, through which a railroad is being built, the charitable ladies, who, moved by the report of the wrongs and distresses of the newly-arrived labourers, explored the shanties, with offers of relief, were surprised to find the most civil reception, and the most bounding sportfulness from the oldest to the youngest. Perhaps they may thank these dull shovels as safe vents for peccant humours; and this grim day's work of fifteen or sixteen hours, though deplored by all the humanity of the neighbourhood, is a better police than the sheriff and his deputies.

1. But I have abstained too long from speaking of that which led me to this topic,—its importance in creating an American sentiment. An unlooked-for consequence of the railroad, is the increased acquaintance it has given the American people with the boundless resources of their own soil. If this invention has reduced England to a third of its size, by bringing people so much nearer, in this country it has given a new celerity to *time*, or anticipated by fifty years the planting of tracts of land, the choice of water-privileges, the working of mines, and other natural advantages. Railroad iron is a magician's rod, in its power to evoke the sleeping energies of land and water.

The railroad is but one arrow in our quiver, though it has great value as a sort of yard-stick, and surveyor's line. The bountiful continent is ours, state on state, and territory on territory, to the waves of the Pacific sea:

“ Our garden is the immeasurable earth,
The heaven's blue pillars are Medea's house,”

and new duties, new motives, await and cheer us. The task of planting, of surveying, of building upon this immense tract, requires an education and a sentiment commensurate thereto.

A consciousness of this fact is beginning to take the place of the purely trading spirit and education which sprang up whilst all the population lived on the fringe of sea-coast. And even on the coast, prudent men have begun to see that every American should be educated with a view to the values of land. The arts of engineering and of architecture are studied; scientific agriculture is an object of growing attention; the mineral riches are explored; limestone, coal, slate, and iron; and the value of timber-lands is enhanced.

Columbus alleged as a reason for seeking a continent in the West, that the harmony of nature required a great tract of land in the western hemisphere, to balance the known extent of land in the eastern; and it now appears that we must estimate the native values of this immense region to redress the balance of our own judgment, and appreciate the advantages opened to the human race in this country, which is our fortunate home. The land is the appointed remedy for whatever is false and fantastic in our culture. The great continent we inhabit is to be physic and food for our mind, as well as our body. The land, with its tranquillizing, sanative influences, is to repair the errors of a scholastic and traditional education, and bring us into just relations with men and things.

This habit of living in the presence of these invitations of natural wealth is not inoperative; and this habit, combined with the moral sentiment which, in the recent years, has interrogated every institution, and usage, and law, has, very naturally, given a strong direction to the wishes and aims of active young men to withdraw from cities, and cultivate the soil. This inclination has appeared in the most unlooked-for quarters, in men supposed to be absorbed in business, and in those connected with the liberal professions. And since the walks of trade were crowded, whilst that of agriculture cannot easily be, inasmuch as the farmer who is not wanted by others, can yet grow his own bread, whilst the manufacturer or the trader who is not wanted, cannot,—this seemed a happy tendency. For, beside all the moral benefit which we may expect from the farmer's profession, when a man enters it from moral causes, this promised the conquering of the soil, plenty, and beyond this, the adorning of the whole continent with every advantage and ornament which labour, ingenuity, and affection for a man's home, could suggest. This great savage country should be furrowed by the plough, and combed by the harrow; these rough Alleghanies should know their master; these foaming torrents should be bestridden by proud

arches of stone; these wild prairies should be loaded with wheat; the swamps with rice; the hill-tops should pasture innumerable sheep and cattle; the interminable forests should become graceful parks, for use and for delight.

In this country, where land is cheap, and the disposition of the people pacific, every thing invites to the arts of agriculture, of gardening, and domestic architecture. Public gardens, on the scale of such plantations in Europe and Asia, are now unknown to us. There is no feature of the old countries that more agreeably and newly strikes an American, than the beautiful gardens of Europe; such as the Boboli in Florence, the Villa Borghese in Rome, the Villa d'Este in Tivoli: works easily imitated here, and which might well make the land dear to the citizen, and inflame patriotism. It is the fine art which is left for us, now that sculpture, and painting, and religious and civil architecture, have become effete, and have passed into second childhood. We have twenty degrees of latitude wherein to choose a seat, and the new modes of travelling enlarge the opportunity of selection, by making it easy to cultivate very distant tracts, and yet remain in strict intercourse with the centres of trade and population. And the whole force of all the arts goes to facilitate the decoration of lands and dwellings. A garden has this advantage, that it makes it indifferent where you live. A well-laid garden makes the face of the country about you of no account; low or high, grand or mean, you have made a beautiful abode worthy of man. If the landscape is pleasing, the garden shows it,—if tame, it excludes it. A little grove, which any farmer can find, or cause to grow near his house, will, in a few years, so fill the eye and mind of the inhabitant, as to make cataracts and chains of mountains quite unnecessary to his scenery; and he is so contented with his alleys, woodlands, orchards, and rivers, that Niagara, and the Notch of the White Hills, and Nantasket Beach, are superfluities. And yet the selection of a fit house-lot has the same advantage over an indifferent one, as the selection to a given employment of a man who has a genius for that work. In the last case, all the culture of years will never make the most painstaking scholar his equal: no more will gardening give the advantage of a happy site to a house in a hole or on a pinnacle. "God Almighty first planted a garden," says Lord Bacon, "and it is the purest of human pleasures. It is the greatest refreshment to the spirits of man, without which, buildings and palaces are but gross handyworks: and a man shall ever see that when ages grow to civility and elegance, men come

to build stately, sooner than to garden finely, as if gardening were the greater perfection." Bacon has followed up this sentiment in his two *Essays on Buildings*, and *on Gardens*, with many pleasing details on the decoration of lands; and Aubrey has given us an engaging account of the manner in which Bacon finished his own manor at Gorhambury. In America, we have hitherto little to boast in this kind. The cities continually drain the country of the best part of its population: the flower of the youth, of both sexes, goes into the towns, and the country is cultivated by a so much inferior class. The land,—travel a whole day together,—looks poverty-stricken, and the buildings plain and poor. In Europe, where society has an aristocratic structure, the land is full of men of the best stock, and the best culture, whose interest and pride it is to remain half the year on their estates, and to fill them with every convenience and ornament. Of course these make model farms, and model architecture, and are a constant education to the eye of the surrounding population. Whatever events in progress shall go to disgust men with cities, and infuse into them the passion for country-life, and country-pleasures, will render a prodigious service to the whole face of this continent, and will further the most poetic of all the occupations of real life, the bringing out by art the native but hidden graces of the landscape.

I look on such improvements, also, as directly tending to endear the land to the inhabitant, and give him whatever is valuable in local attachment. Any relation to the land, the habit of tilling it, or mining it, or even hunting on it, generates the feeling of patriotism. He who keeps shop on it, or he who merely uses it as a support to his desk and ledger, or to his manufactory, values it very little. The vast majority of the people of this country live by the land, and carry its quality in their manners and opinions. We in the Atlantic states, by position, have been commercial, and have, as I said, imbibed easily an European culture. Luckily for us, now that steam has narrowed the Atlantic to a strait, the nervous, rocky West is intruding a new and continental element into the national mind, and we shall yet have an American genius. How much better when the whole land is a garden, and the people have grown up in the bowers of a paradise. Without looking, then, to those extraordinary social influences which are now acting in precisely this direction, but only at what is inevitably doing around us, I think we must regard the *land* as a commanding and increasing power on the American citi-

zen, the sanative and Americanizing influence, which promises to disclose new powers for ages to come.

2. In the second place, the uprising and culmination of the new and anti-feudal power of Commerce, is the political fact of most significance to the American at this hour.

We cannot look on the freedom of this country, in connection with its youth, without a presentiment that here shall laws and institutions exist on some scale of proportion to the majesty of nature. To men legislating for the vast area betwixt the two oceans, betwixt the snows and the tropics, somewhat of the gravity and grandeur of nature will infuse itself into the code. A heterogeneous population crowding on all ships from all corners of the world, to the great gates of North America, namely, Boston, New York, and New Orleans, and thence proceeding inward to the prairie and the mountains, and quickly contributing their private thought to the public opinion, their toll to the treasury, and their vote to the election, it cannot be doubted that the legislation of this country should become more catholic and cosmopolitan than that of any other. It seems so easy for America to inspire and express the most expansive and humane spirit; new-born, free, healthful, strong, the land of the labourer, of the democrat, of the philanthropist, of the believer, of the saint, she should speak for the human race. America is the country of the Future. From Washington, its capital city, proverbially "the city of magnificent distances," through all its cities, states, and territories, it is a country of beginnings, of projects, of vast designs, and expectations. It has no past: all has an onward and prospective look. And herein is it fitted to receive more readily every generous feature which the wisdom or the fortune of man has yet to impress.

Gentlemen, there is a sublime and friendly Destiny by which the human race is guided,—the race never dying, the individual never spared,—to results affecting masses and ages. Men are narrow and selfish, but the Genius, or Destiny, is not narrow but beneficent. It is not discovered in their calculated and voluntary activity, but in what befalls, with or without their design. Only what is inevitable interests us, and it turns out that love and good are inevitable, and in the course of things. That Genius has infused itself into nature. It indicates itself by a small excess of good, a small balance in brute facts always favourable to the side of reason. All the facts in any part of nature shall be tabulated, and the results shall indicate the same security and benefit; so slight

as to be hardly observable, and yet it is there. The sphere is found flattened at the poles, and swelled at the equator; a form flowing necessarily from the fluid state, yet *the* form, the mathematician assures us, required to prevent the great protuberances of the continent, or even of lesser mountains cast up at any time by earthquakes, from continually deranging the axis of the earth. The census of the population is found to keep an invariable equality in the sexes, with a trifling predominance in favour of the male, as if to counterbalance the necessarily increased exposure of male life in war, navigation, and other accidents. Remark the unceasing effort throughout nature at somewhat better than the actual creatures: *amelioration in nature*, which alone permits and authorizes amelioration in mankind. The population of the world is a conditional population; these are not the best, but the best that could live in the existing state of soils, of gases, animals, and morals: the best that could *yet* live; there shall be a better, please God. This Genius, or Destiny, is of the sternest administration, though rumours exist of its secret tenderness. It may be styled a cruel kindness, serving the whole even to the ruin of the member; a terrible communist, reserving all profits to the community, without dividend to individuals. Its law is, you shall have every thing as a member, nothing to yourself. For Nature is the noblest engineer, yet uses a grinding economy, working up all that is wasted to-day into to-morrow's creation;—not a superfluous grain of sand, for all the ostentation she makes of expense and public works. It is because nature thus saves and uses, labouring for the general, that we poor particulars are so crushed and straitened, and find it so hard to live. She flung us out in her plenty, but we cannot shed a hair, or a paring of a nail, but instantly she snatches at the shred, and appropriates it to the general stock. Our condition is like that of the poor wolves: if one of the flock wound himself, or so much as limp, the rest eat him up incontinently.

That serene Power interposes an irresistible check upon the caprices and officiousness of our wills. His charity is not our charity. One of his agents is our will, but that which expresses itself in our will, is stronger than our will. We are very forward to help it, but it will not be accelerated. It resists our meddling, eleemosynary contrivances. We devise sumptuary laws and relief laws, but the principle of population is always reducing wages to the lowest pittance on which human life can be sustained. We legislate against forestalling and monopoly; we would have a common granary for the

poor; but the selfishness which stores and hoards the corn for high prices, is the preventive of famine; and the law of self-preservation is surer policy than any legislation can be. We concoct eleemosynary systems, and it turns out that our charity increases pauperism. We inflate our paper currency, we repair commerce with unlimited credit, and are presently visited with unlimited bankruptcy.

It is easy to see that we of the existing generation are conspiring with a beneficence, which, in its working for coming generations, sacrifices the passing one, which infatuates the most selfish men to act against their private interest for the public welfare. We build railroads, we know not for what or for whom; but one thing is very certain, that we who build will receive the very smallest share of benefit therefrom. Immense benefit will accrue; they are essential to the country, but that will be felt not until we are no longer countrymen. We do the like in all matters:—

“Man’s heart the Almighty to the Future set
By secret and inviolable springs.”

We plant trees, we build stone houses, we redeem the waste, we make long prospective laws, we found colleges, hospitals, but for many and remote generations. We should be very much mortified to learn that the little benefit we chanced in our own persons to receive was the utmost they would yield.

The history of commerce, which of course includes the history of the world, is the record of this beneficent tendency. The patriarchal form of government readily becomes despotic, as each person may see in his own family. Fathers wish to be the fathers of the minds of their children, as well as of their bodies, and behold with great impatience a new character and way of thinking presuming to show itself in their own son or daughter. This feeling, which all their love and pride in the powers of their children cannot subdue, becomes petulance and tyranny when the head of the clan, the emperor of an empire, deals with the same difference of opinion in his subjects. Difference of opinion is the one crime which kings never forgive. An empire is an immense egotism. “I am the State,” said the French Louis. When a French ambassador mentioned to Paul of Russia, that a man of consequence in St. Petersburg was interesting himself in some matter, the Czar vehemently interrupted him with these words,—“There is no man of consequence in this empire, but he with whom I am actually speaking; and so long only as I am speaking to him, is he of any consequence.” And Nicholas, the present emperor, is reported to have said to his council,

"Gentlemen, the age is embarrassed with new opinions. Rely on me, gentlemen, I shall oppose an iron will to the progress of liberal opinions."

It is very easy to see that this patriarchal or family management gets to be rather troublesome to all but the papa; the sceptre comes to be a crowbar. And this very unpleasant egotism, Feudalism or the power of Aristocracy opposes, and finally destroys. The king is compelled to call in the aid of his brothers and cousins, and remote relations, to help him keep his overgrown house in order; and this club of noblemen always come at last to have a will of their own; they combine to brave the sovereign, and call in the aid of the people. Each chief attaches as many followers by kindness, and maintenance, and gifts, as he can; and as long as war lasts, the nobles, who must be soldiers, rule very well. But when peace comes, the nobles prove very whimsical and uncomfortable masters; their frolics turn out to be very insulting and degrading to the commoner. Feudalism grew to be a bandit and brigand.

Meantime Trade (or the merchant and manufacturer) had begun to appear: Trade, a plant which always grows wherever there is peace, as soon as there is peace, and as long as there is peace. The luxury and necessity of the noble fostered it. And as quickly as men go to foreign parts, in ships or caravans, a new order of things springs up; new ideas awake in their minds. New command takes place, new servants and new masters. Their information, their wealth, their correspondence, have made them quite other men than left their native shore. *They* are nobles now, and by another patent than the king's. Feudalism had been good, had broken the power of the kings, and had some very good traits of its own; but it had grown mischievous, it was time for it to die, and, as they say of dying people, all its faults came out. Trade was the strong man that broke it down, and raised a new and unknown power in its place. It is a new agent in the world, and one of great function; it is a very intellectual force. This displaces physical strength, and instals computation, combination, information, science, in its room. It calls out all force of a certain kind that slumbered in the former dynasties. It is now in the midst of its career. Feudalism is not ended yet. Our governments still partake largely of that element. Trade goes to make the governments insignificant, and to bring every kind of faculty of every individual that can in any manner serve any person, *on sale*. Instead of a huge Army and Navy, and Executive Departments, it tends

to convert Government into a bureau of intelligence, an Intelligence-Office, where every man may find what he wishes to buy, and expose what he has to sell, not only produce and manufactures, but art, skill, and intellectual and moral values. This is the good and this the evil of trade, that it goes to put everything *into market*, talent, beauty, virtue, and man himself.

By this means, however, it has done its work. It has its faults, and will come to an end, as the others do. We rail at Trade, and the philosopher and lover of man have much harm to say of it; but the historian of the world will see that Trade was the principle of Liberty; that Trade planted America and destroyed Feudalism; that it makes peace and keeps peace, and it will abolish slavery. We complain of the grievous oppression of the poor, and of its building up a new aristocracy on the ruins of the aristocracy it destroyed. But there is this immense difference, that the aristocracy of trade has no permanence, is not entailed, was the result of toil and talent, the result of merit of some kind, and is continually falling, like the waves of the sea, before new claims of the same sort. Trade is an instrument in the hands of that friendly Power which works for us in our own despite. We design it thus and thus; but it turns out otherwise and far better. This beneficent tendency, omnipotent without violence, exists and works. Every observation of history inspires a confidence that we shall not go far wrong; that things mend. That is it. That is the moral of all we learn, that it warrants Hope, HOPE, the prolific mother of reforms. Our part is plainly not to throw ourselves across the track, not to block improvement, and sit till we are stone, but to watch the up-rise of successive mornings, and to conspire with the new works of new days. Government has been a fossil; it should be a plant. I conceive that the office of statute law should be to express, and not to impede the mind of mankind. New thoughts, new things. Trade was one instrument, but Trade is also but for a time, and must give way to somewhat broader and better, whose signs are already dawning in the sky.

3. I pass in the third place to speak of the signs of that which is the sequel of trade.

It is in consequence of the revolution in the state of society wrought by trade, that Government in our times is beginning to wear so clumsy and cumbrous an appearance. We have already seen our way to shorter methods. The time is full of good signs. Some of them shall ripen to fruit. All this beneficent socialism is a friendly omen, and the swelling cry

of voices for the education of the people, indicates that Government has other offices than those of banker and executioner. Witness the new movements in the civilized world, the Communism of France, Germany, and Switzerland; the Trades' Unions; the English League against the Corn Laws; and the whole *Industrial Statistics*, so called. In Paris, the blouse, the badge of the operative, has begun to make its appearance in the saloons. Witness, too, the spectacle of Three Communities which have, within a very short time, sprung up within this Commonwealth, beside several others undertaken by citizens of Massachusetts within the territory of other States. These proceeded from a variety of motives, from an impatience of many usages in common life, from a wish for greater freedom than the manners and opinions of society permitted, but in great part from a feeling that the true offices of the State, the State had let fall to the ground; that in the scramble of parties for the public purse, the main duties of Government were omitted, the duty to instruct the ignorant, to supply the poor with work, and with good guidance. These communists preferred the agricultural life, as the most favourable condition for human culture; but they thought that the farm, as we manage it, did not satisfy the right ambition of man. The farmer, after sacrificing pleasure, taste, freedom, thought, love, to his work, turns out often a bankrupt, like the merchant. This result might well seem astounding. All this drudgery, from cock-crowing to starlight, for all these years, to end in mortgages and the auctioneer's flag, and removing from bad to worse. It is time to have the thing looked into, and with a sifting criticism ascertained who is the fool. It seemed a great deal worse because the farmer is living in the same town with men who pretend to know exactly what he wants. On one side is agricultural chemistry, coolly exposing the nonsense of our spendthrift agriculture and ruinous expense of manures, and offering, by means of a teaspoonful of our artificial guano, to turn a sandbank into corn; and, on the other, the farmer, not only eager for the information, but with bad crops and in debt and bankruptcy, for want of it. Here are Etzlers and countless mechanical projectors, who, with the Fourierists, undoubtingly affirm that the smallest union would make every man rich; and, on the other side, is this multitude of poor men and women seeking work, and who cannot find enough to pay their board. The science is confident, and surely the poverty is real. If any means could be found to bring these two together!

This was one design of the projectors of the Associations which are now making their first feeble experiments. They were founded in love and in labour. They proposed, as you know, that all men should take a part in the manual toil, and proposed to amend the condition of men, by substituting harmonious for hostile industry. It was a noble thought of Fourier, which gives a favourable idea of his system, to distinguish in his Phalanx a class as the Sacred Band, by whom whatever duties were disagreeable, and likely to be omitted, were to be assumed.

At least, an economical success seemed certain for the enterprise, and that agricultural association must, sooner or later, fix the price of bread, and drive single farmers into association, in self-defence; as the great commercial and manufacturing companies had already done. The community is only the continuation of the same movement which made the joint-stock companies for manufactures, mining, insurance, banking, and so forth. It has turned out cheaper to make calico by companies; and it is proposed to plant corn, and to bake bread by companies, and knowing men affirm it will be tried until it is done.

Undoubtedly, abundant mistakes will be made by these first adventurers, which will draw ridicule on their schemes. I think, for example, that they exaggerate the importance of a favourite project of theirs, that of paying talent and labour at one rate, paying all sorts of service at one rate, say ten cents the hour. They have paid it so; but not an instant would a dime remain a dime. In one hand it became an eagle as it fell, and in another hand a copper cent. For, obviously, the whole value of the dime is in knowing what to do with it. One man buys with it a land-title of an Indian, and makes his posterity princes; or buys corn enough to feed the world; or pen, ink, and paper, or a painter's brush, by which he can communicate himself to the human race as if he were fire; and the other buys plums and gooseberries. Money is of no value: it cannot spend itself. All depends on the skill of the spender.

Whether, too, the objection almost universally felt by such women in the community as were mothers, to an associate life, to a common table, and a common nursery, &c., setting a higher value on the private family with poverty, than on an association with wealth, will not prove insuperable, remains to be determined.

But the Communities aimed at a much greater success in securing to all their members an equal, and very thorough

education. And the great aims of the movement will not be relinquished, even if these attempts fail, but will be prosecuted by like-minded men in all society, until they succeed.

This is the value of the Communities; not what they have done, but the revolution which they indicate as on the way. Yes, Government must educate the poor man. Look across the country from any hill-side around us, and the landscape seems to crave Government. The actual differences of men must be acknowledged, and met with love and wisdom. These rising grounds which command the champaign below, seem to ask for lords, true lords, *land*-lords, who understand the land and its uses, and the applicabilities of men, and whose government would be what it should, namely, mediation between want and supply. How gladly would each citizen pay a commission for the support and continuation of such good guidance. Goethe said, "no man should be rich but those who understand it:" and certainly the poor are prone to think that very few of the rich understand how to use their advantage to any good purpose; they have not originality, nor even grace in their expenditure. But if this is true of wealth, it is much more true of power; none should be a governor who has not a talent for governing. Now many people have a native skill for carving out business for many hands; a genius for the disposition of affairs; and are never happier than when difficult practical questions which embarrass other men, are to be solved: all lies in light before them: they are in their element. Could any means be contrived to appoint only these! There really seems a progress towards such a state of things, in which this work shall be done by these natural workmen; and this, not certainly through any increased discretion shown by the citizens at elections, but by the gradual contempt into which official government falls, and the increasing disposition of private adventurers to assume its fallen functions. Thus the Post Office is likely to go into disuse before the private transportation shop of Harnden and his competitors. The currency threatens to fall entirely into private hands. Justice is continually administered more and more by private reference, and not by litigation. We have feudal governments in a commercial age. It would be but an easy extension of our commercial system, to pay a private emperor a fee for services, as we pay an architect, or engineer, or a lawyer for advice. If any man has a talent for righting wrong, for administering difficult affairs, for counselling poor farmers how to turn their estates to good husbandry, for combining a hundred

private enterprises to a general benefit, let him in the country town, or in Court-street, put up his sign-board, Mr. Smith, Governor, Mr. Johnson, *Working king*.

How can our young men complain of the poverty of things in New England, and not feel that poverty as a demand on their charity to make New England rich? Where is he who seeing a thousand men useless and unhappy, and making the whole region look forlorn by their inaction, and conscious himself of possessing the faculty they want, does not hear his call to go and be their king?

We must have kings, and we must have nobles. Nature is always providing such in every society,—only let us have the real instead of the titular. Let us have our leading and our inspiration from the best. The actual differences in personal power are not to be disputed. In every society some men are born to rule, and some to advise. Let the powers be well directed, directed by love, and they would everywhere be greeted with joy and honour. The chief is the chief all the world over, only not his cap and his plume. It is only their dislike of the pretender, which makes men sometimes unjust to the true and finished man. If society were transparent, the noble would everywhere be gladly received and accredited, and would not be asked for his day's work, but would be felt as benefit, inasmuch as he was noble. That were his duty and stint,—to keep himself pure and purifying, the leaven of his nation. I think I see place and duties for a nobleman in every society; but it is not to drink wine and ride in a fine coach, but to guide and adorn life for the multitude by forethought, by elegant studies, by perseverance, self-devotion, and the remembrance of the humble old friend, by making his life secretly beautiful.

I call upon you, young men, to obey your heart, and be the nobility of this land. In every age of the world, there has been a leading nation, one of a more generous sentiment, whose eminent citizens were willing to stand for the interests of general justice and humanity, at the risk of being called, by the men of the moment, chimerical and fantastic. Which should be that nation but these States? Which should lead that movement, if not New England? Who should lead the leaders, but the Young American? The people, and the world, is now suffering from the want of religion and honour in its public mind. In America, out of doors all seems a market; in doors, an air-tight stove of conventionalism. Every body who comes into our houses savours of these precious habits; the men of the market, the women of the

custom. I find no expression in our state papers or legislative debate, in our lyceums or churches, specially in our newspapers, of a high national feeling, no lofty counsels that rightfully stir the blood. I speak of those organs which can be presumed to speak a popular sense. They recommend only conventional virtues, whatever will earn and preserve property; always the capitalist; the college, the church, the hospital, the theatre, the hotel, the road, the ship, of the capitalist,—whatever goes to secure, adorn, enlarge these, is good; what jeopardizes any of these, is damnable. The “opposition” papers, so-called, are on the same side. They attack the great capitalist, but with the aim to make a capitalist of the poor man. The opposition is between the ins and the outs; between those who have money, and those who wish to have money. But who announces to us in journal, or in pulpit, or in the street,

“ Man alone
Can perform the impossible.”

I take pleasure in adding the succeeding lines from the ode of the German poet :—

“ He distinguishes,
Chooses, and judges,
He can impart to the
Moment duration.

“ Noble be man,
Helpful and good !
Since that alone
Distinguishes him
From all the beings
Which we know.

“ Hail to the unknown
Higher powers
Whom we divine !
His pattern teach us
Faith in them !”

I shall not need to go into an enumeration of our national defects and vices which require this Order of Censors in the state. I might not set down our most proclaimed offences as the worst. It is not often the worst trait that occasions the loudest outcry. Men complain of their suffering, and not of the crime. I fear little from the bad effect of Repudiation; I do not fear that it will spread. Stealing is a suicidal business; you cannot repudiate but once. But the bold face and tardy repentance permitted to this local mischief, reveal a public mind so preoccupied with the love of gain, that the

common sentiment of indignation at fraud does not act with its natural force. The more need of a withdrawal from the crowd, and a resort to the fountain of right, by the brave. The timidity of our public opinion is our disease, or, shall I say, the publicness of opinion, the absence of private opinion. Good-nature is plentiful, but we want justice, with heart of steel, to fight down the proud. The private mind has the access to the totality of goodness and truth, that it may be a balance to a corrupt society ; and to stand for the private verdict against popular clamour, is the office of the noble. If a humane measure is propounded in behalf of the slave, or of the Irishman, or the Catholic, or for the succour of the poor, that sentiment, that project, will have the homage of the hero. That is his nobility, his oath of knighthood, to succour the helpless and oppressed ; always to throw himself on the side of weakness, of youth, of hope, on the liberal, on the expansive side, never on the defensive, the conserving, the timorous, the lock and bolt system. More than our good will we may not be able to give. We have our own affairs, our own genius, which chains us to our proper work. We cannot give our life to the cause of the debtor, of the slave, or the pauper, as another is doing, but one thing we are bound to, not to blaspheme the sentiment and the work of that man, not to throw stumbling blocks in the way of the abolitionist, the philanthropist, as the organs of influence and opinion are swift to do. It is for us to confide in the beneficent Supreme Power, and not to rely on our money, and on the state because it is the guard of money. At this moment, the terror of old people and of vicious people, is lest the Union of these States be destroyed. As if the Union had any other real basis than the good pleasure of a majority of the citizens to be united. But the wise and just man will always feel that he stands on his own feet ; that he imparts strength to the state, not receives security from it ; and that if all went down, he and such as he would quite easily combine in a new and better constitution. Every great and memorable community has consisted of formidable individuals, who, like the Roman or the Spartan, lent his own spirit to the state, and so made it great. Yet only by the supernatural is a man strong : only by confiding in the Divinity which stirs in us. Nothing is so weak as an egotist. Nothing is mightier than we, when we are vehicles of a truth before which the state and the individual are alike ephemeral.

Gentlemen, the development of our American internal resources, the extension to the utmost of the commercial

system, and the appearance of new moral causes which are to modify the state, are giving an aspect of greatness to the Future, which the imagination fears to open. One thing is plain for all men of common sense and common conscience, that here, here in America, is the home of man. After all the deductions which are to be made for our pitiful and most unworthy politics, which stake every gravest national question on the silly die, whether James or whether Jonathan shall sit in the chair and hold the purse, after all the deduction is made for our frivolities and insanities, there still remains an organic simplicity and liberty, which, when it loses its balance, redresses itself presently, which offers opportunity to the human mind not known in any other region.

It is true, the public mind wants self-respect. We are full of vanity, of which the most signal proof is our sensitiveness to foreign and especially English censure. One cause of this is our immense reading, and that reading chiefly confined to the productions of the English press. But a more misplaced sensibility than this tenderness to fame on the subject of our country and civil institutions, I cannot recall. Could we not defend and apologize for the sun and rain. Here are we, men of English blood, planted now for five, six, or seven generations on this immense tract in the temperate zone, and so planted at such a conjuncture of time and events, that we have left behind us whatever old and odious establishments the mind of men had outgrown. The unsupportable burdens under which Europe staggers, and almost every mouth mutters "A Revolution ! a Revolution !" we have escaped from as by one bound. No thanks to us ; but in the blessed course of events it did happen that this country was not open to the Puritans until they had felt the burden of the feudal system, and until the commercial era in modern Europe had dawned, so that without knowing what they did, they left the whole curse behind, and put the storms of the Atlantic between them and this antiquity. And the felling of the forest, and the settling in so far of the area of this continent, was accomplished under the free spirit of trading communities with a complete success. Not by our right hand, or foresight, or skill, was it done, but by the simple acceptance of the plainest road ever shown men to walk in. It was the human race, under Divine leading, going forth to receive and inhabit their patrimony. And now, if any Englishman, or Frenchman, or Spaniard, or Russian, or German, can find any food for merriment in the spectacle, make him welcome to shake his sides. There never was a people that could better afford to be the

subject of a little fun, than we. An honest man may, perhaps, wonder how, with so much to call forth congratulation, our lively visitors should be so merry and critical. Perhaps they have great need of a little holiday and diversion from their domestic cares, like other house-keepers who have a heavy time of it at home, and need all the refreshment they can get from kicking up their feet a little now that they have got away on a frolic.

It is also true, that, to imaginative persons in this country, there is somewhat bare and bald in our short history, and unsettled wilderness. They ask, who would live in a new country, that can live in an old? Europe is to our boys and girls, what novels and romances are; and it is not strange they should burn to see the picturesque extremes of an antiquated country. But it is one thing to visit the pyramids, and another to wish to live there. Would they like tithes to the clergy, and sevenths to the government, and horse-guards, and licensed press, and grief when a child is born, and threatening, starved weavers, and a pauperism now constituting one-thirteenth of the population? Instead of the open future expanding here before the eye of every boy to vastness, would they like the closing in of the future to a narrow slit of sky, and that fast contracting to be no future? One thing, for instance, the beauties of aristocracy, we commend to the study of the travelling American. The English, the most conservative people this side of India, are not sensible of the restraint, but an American would seriously resent it. The aristocracy, incorporated by law and education, degrades life for the unprivileged classes. It is a questionable compensation to the embittered feeling of a proud commoner, the reflection that the worthless lord who, by the magic of title, paralyzes his arm, and plucks from him half the graces and rights of a man, is himself also an aspirant excluded with the same ruthlessness from higher circles, since there is no end to the wheels within wheels of this spiral heaven. Something may be pardoned to the spirit of loyalty when it becomes fantastic; and something to the imagination, for the baldest life is symbolic. Philip II. of Spain rated his ambassador for neglecting business of great importance in Italy, whilst he debated some point of honour with the French ambassador; "You have left a business of importance for a ceremony." The ambassador replied, "How? for a ceremony? your majesty's self is but a ceremony." In the East, where the religious sentiment comes in to the support of the aristocracy, and in the Romish church also, there is a grain of sweetness in the tyranny; but

in England, the fact seems to me intolerable, what is commonly affirmed, that such is the transcendent honour accorded to wealth and birth, that no man of letters, be his eminence what it may, is received into the best society, except as a lion and a show. It seems to me, that with the lights which are now gleaming in the eyes of all men, residence in that country becomes degradation to any man not employed to revolutionize it. The English have many virtues, many advantages, and the proudest history of the world; but they need all, and more than all, the resources of the past to indemnify a heroic gentleman in that country for the mortifications prepared for him by the system of society, and which seem to impose the alternative to resist or to avoid it. That there are mitigations and practical alleviations to this rigour, is not an excuse for the rule. Commanding worth, and personal power, must sit crowned in all companies, nor will extraordinary persons be slighted or affronted in any company of civilized men. But the system is an invasion of the sentiment of justice and the native rights of men, which, however decorated, must lessen the value of English citizenship. It is for Englishmen to consider, not for us: we only say, let us live in America, too thankful for our want of feudal institutions. Our houses and towns are like mosses and lichens, so slight and new; but youth is a fault of which we shall daily mend. And really at last all lands are alike. Ours, too, is as old as the Flood, and wants no ornament or privilege which nature could bestow. Here stars, here woods, here hills, here animals, here men abound, and the vast tendencies concur of a new order. If only the men are well employed in conspiring with the designs of the Spirit who led us hither, and is leading us still, we shall quickly enough advance out of all hearing of others' censures, out of all regrets of our own, into a new and more excellent social state than history has recorded.

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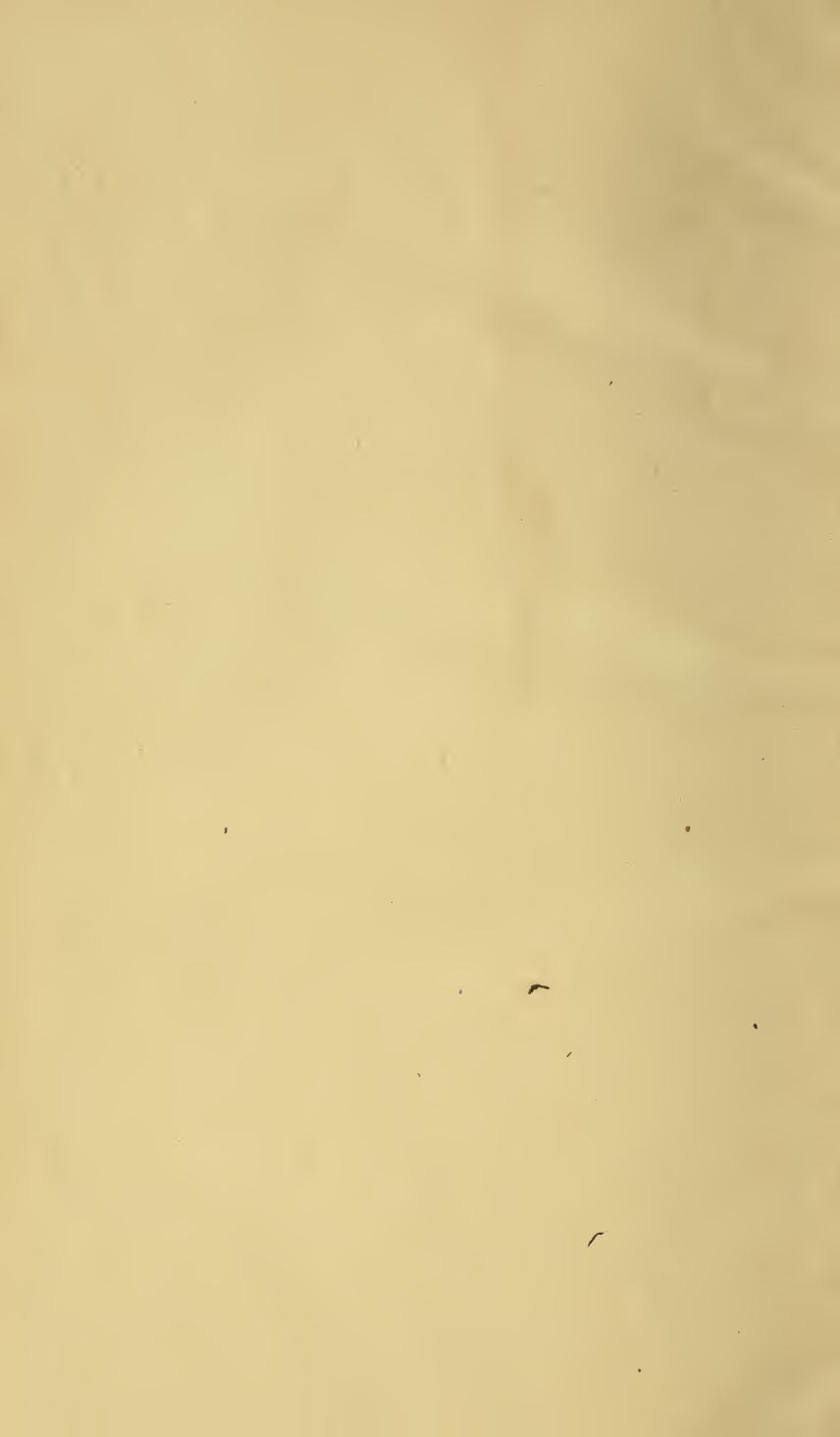
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